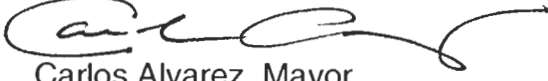




**MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

DATE: May 10, 2006

TO: Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez
Board of County Commissioners

FROM: 
Carlos Alvarez, Mayor
Miami-Dade County

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendment to the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance – Gifts

In my memorandum to you dated March 13, 2006, I recommended strengthening Miami-Dade County's Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance (Ethics Ordinance), which outlines the minimum ethical standards for county and municipal elected officials, public employees, members of advisory boards and quasi-judicial bodies. The main provisions of my proposal were to extend the financial disclosure requirement for elected officials and high level executives to a third party, require specified personnel to file more detailed financial disclosures, subject disclosure statements to random auditing, and make this information available on-line.

As the elected representatives of our respective areas, the voters have placed their confidence in each of us to act in the best interests of our community. Yet, in order to safeguard the public trust and exemplify the highest ethical standards, I firmly believe we are obliged to go beyond simple **disclosure** of potential conflict of interests and must strive to **avoid** the appearance of being beholden to anyone but the public. To this end, I am proposing that the section of the Ethics Ordinance relating to gifts be amended as follows:

- Prohibit the acceptance of gifts valued greater than \$100, regardless of disclosure. No change is proposed to the current exemptions from the definition of gift. In other words, no County or municipal elected official, employee, or board member can accept any gifts valued over \$100 – except in instances already exempted in the Ethics Ordinance.

I want to reiterate that this is only a draft proposal, and I appreciate any suggestions on this and other conflict of interest and ethics legislation. Because County ethics ordinances establish the minimum standards that city governments must adhere to, I also invite their participation in proposing revisions to the Ethics Ordinance.

Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez
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As I have stated previously, I believe that, as Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners (Board), you are in a unique position to take a leadership role in promoting the ethical culture of our public servants. In conjunction with strengthening other portions of the Ethics Ordinance, restricting the acceptance of gifts is a reasonable measure to solidify the people's trust in government. I look forward to working with you and the other members of the Board in promoting an ethical environment that will serve as a model for others.

c: Honorable Members, Board of County Commissioners
Honorable Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of Courts
George Burgess, County Manager
Murray A. Greenberg, County Attorney
Kay Sullivan, Director, Clerk of the Board
Robert Meyers, Executive Director, Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust
Richard Kuper, Executive Director, Miami-Dade League of Cities